THE UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A PREACHING MODEL FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

A FINAL DOCUMENT

SUBMITTED TO THE UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FACULTY IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

UNITED THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY LIBRARY
D. Min
Thesis
1991

by

ALVIN O'NEAL JACKSON

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

January, 1991

Thesis

ABSTRACT

A PREACHING MODEL FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

BY

Alvin O'Neal Jackson

United Theological Seminary, 1991

Consultants: Dr. Henry H. Mitchell, Dr. Edward Wheeler

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY

This project addresses the challenge of the church to involve more people in doing ministry. It includes a video-taped series of five sermons on the book of Ephesians in con-junction with small group study sessions. The model was tested at the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in Memphis, Tennessee, a congregation of 4500 members. This project demonstrated that the small group process was crucial to helping people make a commitment to become more involved in the ministry of the local congregation. This project provides a useful resource to pastors who seek not just to count numbers, but to make numbers count.

MAY 09 1994

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 4

A. Statement of Problem 4

B. Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church 8

II. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS AND THEOLOGY 15

A. What is Preaching? 18

B. What are Spiritual Gifts 20

C. What was Paul's View of the Church 21

D. What are the Varieties of Gifts 24

III. DESIGN OF THE PROJECT 33

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT..... 38

V. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT 47

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS 53

VII. APPENDIX

A. Gift Scroll i

B. Letter to Congregation ii

VIII. COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY iii

RESEARCH IN MINISTRY — RIM®
Submission Form

Index Data:

Title: A PREACHING MODEL FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

Author: ALVIN O'NEAL JACKSON

Degree Granting Institution: UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Date D.Min. was/will be awarded: May 25, 1991

Number of Pages: 56

Project/Thesis Director: Dr. Henry Mitchell

D. Min. Program Director: Dr. Mary Olson

Abstract — 100 words or less following guidelines on back:

This project addresses the challenge of the church to involve more people in doing ministry. It includes a video-taped series of five sermons on the book of Ephesians in conjunction with small group study sessions. The model was tested at the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in Memphis, Tennessee, a congregation of 4500 members. This project demonstrates that the small group process was crucial to helping people make a commitment to become more involved in the ministry of the local congregation. This project provides a useful resource to pastors who seek not just to count numbers, but to make numbers count.

Permission Release:

I, the author of the above abstract, hereby give permission to *Research In Ministry* (RIM®): *An Index to Doctor of Ministry Theses and Projects*, to publish the above abstract and to include it in all online information retrieval systems used by the American Theological Library Assocation, Religion Indexes. In addition, I certify that I have not assigned or granted my right to apply for a copyright, if any, in the above abstract.

Signature Alvin O. Jackson Date 5/17/91

If this abstract has already been submitted for publication, in what publication does it appear?

Please address all correspondence to: Alvin O'Neal Jackson

250 East Raines Road

Memphis, TN 38109

THE UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

A PREACHING MODEL FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

A FINAL DOCUMENT

SUBMITTED TO THE UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

FACULTY IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

by

ALVIN O'NEAL JACKSON

UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY LIBRARY
D. Min
Thesis
1991

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

January, 1991

ABSTRACT

A PREACHING MODEL FOR EQUIPPING DISCIPLES

BY

Alvin O'Neal Jackson

United Theological Seminary, 1991

Consultants: Dr. Henry H. Mitchell, Dr. Edward Wheeler

This project addresses the challenge of the church to involve more people in doing ministry. It includes a video-taped series of five sermons on the book of Ephesians in con-junction with small group study sessions. The model was tested at the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in Memphis, Tennessee, a congregation of 4500 members. This project demonstrated that the small group process was crucial to helping people make a commitment to become more involved in the ministry of the local congregation. This project provides a useful resource to pastors who seek not just to count numbers, but to make numbers count.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 4

A. Statement of Problem 4

B. Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church 8

II. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS AND THEOLOGY 15

A. What is Preaching? 18

B. What are Spiritual Gifts 20

C. What was Paul's View of the Church 21

D. What are the Varieties of Gifts 24

III. DESIGN OF THE PROJECT 33

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT..... 38

V. EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT 47

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS 53

VII. APPENDIX

A. Gift Scroll i

B. Letter to Congregation ii

VIII. COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY iii

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

As a pastor and preacher who preaches on the average of three times weekly, one of the ongoing struggles of my ministry is to keep my preaching dynamic, fresh and effective. Many people have come to Christ and His Church under my preaching. With a participating church membership that has grown from 350 to 4500 plus over the last eleven years, it is exciting to see large numbers of people come down the aisles each Sunday when the invitation to Christian discipleship is extended. However, while there has been phenomenal growth in numbers, I realize that the real challenge of ministry is to move beyond a fixation on numbers to genuine discipleship, which involves not only growing in numbers, but growing up in Christ; growing down in the Word; growing out into the world; and growing within the fellowship.

Bill Hull in his book, The Disciple Making Pastor[1] states that:

> "The 1980 Gallup poll indicated that of the 22 million church-going evangelicals, only 7 percent had taken any evangelistic training and only 2 percent had introduced another person to Jesus Christ. How would you like to march in battle with only 7 percent of your troops trained and only 2 percent with combat experience? While I pray these figures have changed in eight years, I would guess that today's figures are much the same."

---

[1] Bill Hull, The Disciple Making Pastor, (Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1988), 24

Hull further states that:

> "This illustrates the need for asking the right question. How could the 3,000 gathered for worship compose a great church, if only 7 percent were trained to witness and only 2 percent had introduced another to Christ? The test of a congregation, apart from personal holiness, is how effectively members penetrate the world. American churches are filled with pew-filling, sermon-tasting, spiritual schizophrenics, whose belief and behavior are not congruent."

This must be the test of the effectiveness of one's ministry, not mere numbers, not how many people "joined" on a given Sunday, but whether people are led to a faith posture where they move from a pre-occupation with self and their circumstances to channel their energies toward a power relationship with God. The real test of discipleship is the question of faith and trust - do we trust God with our time, talents and treasures. Ultimately to lead people to this faith posture must be the goal of all our preaching and ministry.

We seem to be too easily satisfied in the church with the conventional standard of success: bodies, bucks, and buildings. The average Christian resides in the comfort zone of "I pay the pastor to preach, administrate, and counsel. I pay him, he ministers to me... I am the consumer, he is the retailer... I have the needs, he meets them.... that's what I pay for."

The all-too-common measure of greatness is the number of people gathered for worship. If 3,000 people gather, some may make the snap judgement "this is a great church." Measuring greatness this way has two important flaws. First, numbers

themselves do not indicate greatness. Large groups can gather for any number of events, such as lynchings, mob riots, or Tupperware parties. The more accurate observation concerning a large church gathering might be "the number of people gathered here indicates that those leading the church - the pastor and the music leader - must be highly talented." That would be a good and generally true judgement.

The second flaw of such a superficial measure is that you have asked the wrong question, "How many people are present?" The right questions are: "What are these people like? What kind of families do they have? Are they honest in business? Are they trained to witness? Do they know the Bible? Are they penetrating their work places, their neighborhoods, reaching friends and associates for Christ? Are they making the difference in the world for Christ that He expects?" These are the right questions, the issues of the heart, and the criteria for greatness.

In the relationship between clergy and laity, the clergy have become professional performers and the parishioners the audience. The better the show, the larger the crowd. All this proves is that outstanding performance attracts people. It means little more than that; in no way does it faithfully reflect the priorities of Christ for His Church. As Elton Trueblood has stated, "Cheap Christianity can usually pull a pretty good attendance on Sunday morning. It is cheap whenever people think

of themselves as spectators at a performance."[2] Trueblood goes on to point out that emphasis on how many gather for worship is pre-Christian and pagan. "We fall back into an Old Testament mindset, in which we look mostly at how many people come into the temple for the ritual." That was what counted most under the Old Covenant. Meanwhile, we forget Jesus' words in Matthew 12:6, "I tell you something greater than the temple is here.' " You can always get a crowd, if you demand very little and put on a show.

Deceptively, such success blinds us to the real issues. Are the Christians healthy? Is reproduction taking place? Are people being trained to be disciple makers? What is being asked of the people? Are they living and serving the way God planned? The purpose of gathering Christians is to train them so that they may improve their abilities to penetrate the world. We must stop counting numbers and start making numbers count. This project seeks to address that problem and challenge. However, before describing the project, first it is necessary to understand something of the context of ministry out of which this project comes - the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church of Memphis, Tennessee. And so what follows is a historical overview and an analysis of that context of ministry.

---

[2]Elton Trueblood, "A Time for Holy Dissatisfaction,"Leadership Journal (Winter 1983), 19

B. Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church

Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church of Memphis was organized in January 1921, by a small but determined group of men led by Dr. Joseph Edison Walker. Dr. Walker, a physician who had recently moved to Memphis from Indianola, Mississippi, noted that there was not a Black Disciple congregation in Memphis. Being a life-long Disciple himself, he led the effort in organizing the church in Memphis in 1921. Included in the group that worked with Dr. Walker in this effort were: M.W. Bonner, E.E. Bright, E.H. Winn, Dr. W.H. Luster, Amos Keys, and Brother Smither. Most of these men were business associates of Dr. Walker in an insurance firm that he had recently established in the city. This firm (Universal Life) would become the largest Black owned business in the city and the fourth largest Black insurance firm in the nation. Dr. Walker, along with his son, A. Maceo Walker, would also later establish the only Black owned bank in the city.

Joseph Edison Walker's enthusiasm and determination was transmitted to others of this group. A building fund was started. A location was soon found - a frame building and parsonage erected in 1888 by a White Disciples congregation on Mississippi Boulevard, thus the name Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church.

In the summer of 1921, worship was begun with the Tennessee State Evangelist for Blacks, Elder W.P. Martin, acting as pastor. With a membership of 28, Elder Martin served for almost a year.

He was followed on the last Sunday of December, 1921, by Blair T. Hunt, who would serve the church for 52 years as pastor. Hunt also worked full-time as principal of the Booker T. Washington High School, and was looked upon as one of the leading spokesmen in the Black community. Hunt was one of the small group of ministers who gave primary leadership to the sanitation strike of 1968. It is interesting and of some note that an interracial group of ministers met at the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church the morning of Martin Luther King's death, in an effort to mediate and help resolve the sanitation workers' strike.

J.E. Walker remained the driving force behind the church until his death in 1958. As a matter of fact, when Hunt became Pastor, he was told by Walker to preach and visit the sick and leave the running of the church to the Trustees. This was basically the arrangement with the pastor until I came to the church in 1979. The change to my more aggressive style of leadership was relatively easy because Dr. Walker and many of the original Trustees were no longer living. I often wonder what would have happened if this had not been the case.

With the Walker family and other prominent persons in the community part of Mississippi Boulevard, the church prided itself on the large number of professionals in the membership. At this point in its history, the church tended to be a very staid congregation with a worship style that reflected the predominantly White denomination of which it was a part. The

community at large also perceived the church to be closed to people who were not part of the Black middle-class.

During Hunt's tenure the church grew to a participating membership of around 800. In 1938, the old church was remodeled and transformed into a beautiful buff brick structure worthy of the status of the membership. A new air conditioned sanctuary (the only one at that time in the African-American community) was built in 1950.

Hunt retired in 1973 and became pastor-emeritus. [redacted] of Xenia, Ohio, became pastor in March 1973, and served until June 1978. [redacted] had a very difficult, if not impossible task of following Hunt who had served the church 52 years as pastor. After such a long tenure with Hunt, the membership found it difficult to receive new leadership. [redacted] suffered a nervous breakdown one Sunday morning during the service, and was escorted by the Elders from the pulpit and admitted to the hospital. He became the sacrificial lamb. I thank God for [redacted], because in many ways he paved the way for me.

Much indecision and uncertainty about the church's future followed [redacted]'s illness. Some wanted to wait on his recovery. Others wanted to proceed with the calling of a new minister immediately. After a year and a half of turmoil and the loss of a significant number of members, the church began the process of calling a new minister.

I entered the picture on a cold January morning of 1979. I had to change planes in Memphis, and just as I was about to board

the plane, the agent announced that because of weather conditions in Indianapolis (my destination), the airport was closed and our departure would be delayed for at least three hours.

Extremely disappointed, as I was eager to get home, I was nevertheless determined not to spend that time waiting in the airport. I rented a car and explored Memphis. My itinerary included Beale Street, the Lorraine Motel and the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church.

I had no idea that the church was looking for a minister, but upon arriving I met some of the officials. We talked, and one thing led to another and the church decided to extend a call. I accepted and assumed the responsibilities as pastor in June 1979.

After the uncertainty and turmoil of the recent past and the death of Blair T. Hunt in 1978, the membership shrank to 350 participating members. The church was now ready for new leadership. The worship service was restructured to better reflect the African American worship experience; regular Bible study classes and a weekly radio ministry were established. The church started growing almost immediately. By December of 1979 there had been 75 new additions to the church.

On October 10, 1979, a disastrous fire destroyed the Educational Building and resulted in extensive smoke and water damage to the Sanctuary. The church quickly embarked upon a program we called "Project: Resurrection" and launched a half million dollar building program which included renovation of the

Sanctuary, construction of a new Administrative/Educational Building, and acquisition of adjacent property for future expansion. After holding regular Sunday services at a Seventh Day Adventist Church in the area, we moved back to our church home August, 1980.

The growth continued until in 1984, with a participating membership of 1,500, the church realized that the newly remodeled and renovated facilities on Mississippi Boulevard were inadequate for its needs. So the decision was made to relocate to Whitehaven, purchasing for 1.3 million dollars a church facility with 1,500 seats in the sanctuary, 125 classrooms, full gymnasium and more than adequate office spaces for staff. Our growth since relocating has been phenomenal. We have averaged 530 additions a year for each the past five years. This year, 1990 has truly been phenomenal, with 850 additions in the first eleven months.

Some of the reasons for the phenomenal growth over the last eleven years have been a strong celebrative worship service, with good music and sound, clear preaching, and an atmosphere of openness and friendliness within the congregation. The church today has a budget of 2.4 million dollars. There are 31 full-time and 13 part-time positions on the staff. There are some 850 volunteers who give their time and service to work with the many ministries and activities in the life and work of the church. The church schedule is a very full and busy one, seven days a week, with ministries and activities for every member of the family. The church also has a very strong ministry of

outreach in the community and city, with its emergency assistance program, scholarship fund, housing program, clothes closet, food pantry, prison ministry, etc.

Very recently a strategic plan for the church was developed with the following mission statement:

> The mission of Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) is to serve God by proclaiming the gospel to win souls to Jesus Christ. Using the scriptures as the basis for our beliefs and actions, and with Jesus as our message, we administer to the holistic needs of the congregation and our community. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we promote the wholeness of the people of God, through worship, study, prayer and service. Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church joins in ecumenical efforts that complement its role and purpose on a local, national and international level."[3]

The demographics of the church are as follows:

Children	0-12	523
Youth	13-17	374
Young Adults	18-21	396
Males	22-35	528
Males	36-54	359
Males	55-70	171
Males	71 & over	46
Females	22-35	1,106
Females	36-54	826

---

[3]Report of the Long Range Planning Committee, Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church, (Memphis, Tenn., 1990), 10

Females	55-70	118
Females	71 & over	95
Totals		4,515

The average attendance at 9:00 a.m. worship is 1,800, with an average attendance of 1,000 at the 12:15 p.m. service. It is not uncommon to have an overflow into the Fellowship Hall with service via closed circuit at least two Sundays per month.

The average attendance for Church School fluctuates between 559 and 661. The average attendance in Children's Church totals 110 with an average for the Nursery of 80. At this point, all this really proves is that we have learned how to attract large numbers to worship. The challenge now is to make those numbers count. This need can be clearly seen in the difference between worship attendance and church school attendance, as well the number of people who are involved in the life of the church beyond the Sunday morning experience -- to date only about 800. Thus, the need and the challenge of this project.

Chapter II

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS AND THEOLOGY

My search for a project began at the point of trying to find the biblical foundation and theological framework for an effective preaching model that leads people to genuine discipleship. I knew even at the beginning of the Doctor of Ministry program that in some form or another this had to be the focus of my project. My mentor, Dr. Henry H. Mitchell, provided the generative seed that gave form to the focus of this project. Dr. Mitchell in the class on Preaching taught at United Theological Seminary and in his book, "Celebration and Experience in Preaching[4] put forth the basic premise "that faith is not born of rational argument, nor does it reside primarily in the spheres of the mind where logic is the dominant function." Dr. Mitchell states that "every sermon ought to have clearly defined goals among the hearers stated in behavioral terms. A rule of thumb for clarification of holistic purpose in sermon preparation is to ask, am I struggling to get a point across or am I working at a flow in consciousness which will be used to beget trust and change behavior? Another way to put it is, do I see and feel what I am talking about, or am I myself obsessed with clever, scholarly data and abstract ideas?"

---

[4] Henry H. Mitchell, Celebration and Experience in Preaching, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 24

I had come to believe, during the course of my training and preparation for ministry, that the measure of a great sermon was how "heavy" it was, the amount of new information that it contained. I guess, however, that I have used Dr. Mitchell's rule of thumb intuitively from time to time in sermon preparation, but certainly never in an intentional and consistent manner. So I became most excited about putting this new discovery to the test in a very intentional way. I set out to develop a series of sermons with clear behavioral purposes. A basic purpose in each sermon being to get people to move from mere "hearers of the Word to doers of the Word."

In addition to the inspiration and motivation from Dr. Mitchell, conversation with James Perkins (a Doctor of Ministry student who has since completed his work) in one of the peer seminars around the need to develop a model with results that could easily be measured and evaluated helped greatly to sharpen the focus of this project. One of my peers, Frank Thomas, also gave invaluable assistance in sharing with me an earlier D. Min. project that he did on spiritual gifts.

I took what I perceived to be the greatest need in my context of ministry, that of getting more people involved in doing ministry and added to that Dr. Mitchell's rule of thumb that every sermon should have a clearly stated behavioral purpose. Armed also with the insights gained from James Perkins and Frank Thomas, my project started to come into sharper focus.

My first inclination was to preach a series of sermons on spiritual gifts and to give a pre-test and post-test to help people discover their areas of giftedness, but I soon realized that this was almost identical to what Frank Thomas had done with his earlier D. Min. project and so I set out to find a new approach to this age old challenge of getting people involved in doing ministry.

I started with the basic premise that if preaching is truly preaching it has to have a clear behavioral purpose. The preacher must have in mind what he/she wants the hearers to do as a result of the sermon. With that premise, I established the following goals:

1) to involve the people of the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in a sermon series with the intent of motivating a significant number of the them to make a commitment to do ministry. Specifically, to increase the number of volunteers in the various areas of the church's life and work.

2) to involve a smaller group from the church in structured Bible study sessions around the sermon series to further enhance their commitment to do ministry.

In addition to the project goals, my personal goal throughout this project was to increase my effectiveness as a preacher and pastor, not only in visible expertise but in spiritual depth and biblical grounding.

In developing my theological foundations for this project there were four basic questions to be addressed: (1) What is preaching? (2) What are spiritual gifts? (3) What was Paul's view of the church? (4) What are the varieties of gifts.

A. What Is Preaching?

In an inspired mistranslation the Authorized Version of the Bible, Paul speaks of the "foolishness of preaching" (I Cor. 1:21). For Paul the foolishness is a characteristic of the Gospel itself, not just of our presentation of it. It is God's foolishness, not ours, that is "wiser than men." Yet I believe the mistranslation says something true, for surely part of "the folly of the Gospel" is "the foolishness of preaching" (see Cor. 2:4). Certainly our weekly pulpit monologues are a kind of folly, and it is not surprising that many ministers and theological students have begun to ask radical questions about their purpose and effectiveness.

All of this aside, preaching proclaims a message - a message from God. God wants to tell us about the life which He has to give as a gift. As people are born into the world they do not have this life. Preaching tells of God's gift of life, which He gives to people through His Son Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross and rose again that we might live. Preaching does more than tell of this gift of life. It gives it. Through preaching God tells of His life to the world, but more: God gives Himself to the world. Hence the preacher is God's tool to restore God's life in people. Preaching utters words. Yet according to William H. Williman, "when it is truly preaching, it is the Word of God to man and the power of God at work in man."[5]

---

[5] William H. Williman, Integrative Preaching - The Pulpit at the Center (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), 37

Preaching is indispensable to Christianity. Without preaching a necessary part of its authenticity has been lost. For Christianity is, in its very essence, a religion of the Word of God. No attempt to understand Christianity can succeed which overlooks or denies the truth that the living God has taken the initiative to reveal Himself savingly to fallen humanity; or that His self-revelation has been given by the most straightforward means of communication known to us, namely by a word and words; or that He calls upon those who have heard his word to speak it to others.

First, God spoke through the prophets, interpreting to them the significance of His actions in the history of Israel, and simultaneously instructing them to convey His message to His people, either by speech or by writing or both. Next, and supremely, He spoke in His Son, His "Word...made flesh" and in His Word's words, whether spoken directly or through His apostles. Thirdly, He speaks through His spirit, who Himself bears witness to Christ and to Scripture and makes both come to life to the people of God today. This Trinitarian statement of a speaking Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and so of a Word of God that is scriptural, incarnate and contemporary, is fundamental to the Christian religion. It is God's speech which makes our speech necessary. We must speak what He has spoken. Hence the paramount obligation to preach.

B. What are Spiritual Gifts?

So often when we speak of gifts we are thinking really of rewards. Rewards are earned, deserved, and given as payment for work, or for duty rendered. How well I remember the classmate who in the summer after fourth grade said, "My dad just gave me a new 22-caliber rifle." "Why?" I asked, because it was not his birthday, and it was long before Christmas. I could not understand such an expensive gift. He said, "That's what I got for passing the fourth grade." I have always been astonished at that remark. As a reward for passing the fourth grade, it seemed strangely grotesque. Most of what we call gifts are like that, and any reward given under the guise of a gift became to me distorted and ungainly. We are not discussing personal practices in the workplace, in which rewards are altogether appropriate as ways to deal with job performance, profits, and the like. We're thinking instead of that realm of the Spirit, that dimension of human-divine interaction in which life is enriched when we freely receive from God.

The gift, after all, is given out of unconditional love through the grace of God. Without any requirement, qualification, or demand, it is showered on the soul. For the Christian, God's gift of the Spirit originates in the repository of eternal love, as if it were welling up from a bottomless sea. The love of God is broader than the measure of the human mind, and the gift of the Holy Spirit on our spirits has enormous impact and wide-ranging significance.

Spiritual gifts are more than talents. They are special abilities that are transformed into gifts as they are set free within the life of the Body of Christ. That is, a talent becomes a gift within the Christian community. Everybody has ability, but it is through the church that the Spirit takes ability and makes it into a gift to the glory of God.

The Greek word charisma appears nine times in I Corinthians chapters 12-14. It is the word the Bible most frequently uses for "spiritual gifts". According to James Dunn, "This is the most extensive passage in the word of God on the subject of spiritual gifts, although Romans 12 and Ephesians 4 also are important sources." Dunn states, "In my opinion, the dynamic of spiritual gifts is one of the most powerful resources provided by God for the growth and health of His Church."[6]

C. What was Paul's View of the Church?

All of the major Biblical passages dealing with spiritual gifts are written by Paul, and so it would seem very much in order to examine Paul's view of the church. For Paul, Christian community was the coming together of people who have the same experience of the Spirit moving them to witness to Christ.

---

[6] James Dunn, "Models of Christian Community in the New Testament", The Church is Charismatic edited by Arnold Bittlinger, (World Council of Churches, 1981), 105

This shared experience of Christ and the Spirit drew them together and was the basis of the oneness (I Cor. 12:13 - one Spirit, therefore one body). The basis of the Christian community is the shared experience of the Spirit. The shared experience of grace (charis) inspired a common gratitude and purpose, and was the unifying power of all Christian community. Unity is the gift given by the Spirit, by virtue of the saving experience. It is clear how Paul in II Cor. 13:13,14 could speak of a "Koinonia of the Spirit" - a communion of the Spirit in which all members of the community participated.[7]

As the shared experience of the Spirit began the community, the continuing manifestations or "gifts" of the Spirit keep the community alive. Continual outpouring of the Spirit constitutes the heart (life and growth) of the community.

Paul infused the Greek word charisma (gifts) with new meaning. Literally, charisma means "present" and in everyday Greece, a birthday present. Paul spiritualizes the term so that it signifies God's giving presents (gifts) to Christians. For Paul, charisma denoted any word or act which embodies grace (charis), which is a means of grace to another. Spiritual gifts (charismata) is the Holy Spirit giving grace to one individual in order to grace others for the purpose of "building up"

---

[7]Ibid., p. 108

(oikodome) the Body of Christ. All members of the community, by virtue of participation in the Spirit receive the gifts (charismata). Christian community only exists in the living interplay of charismatic ministry. Dunn very correctly points out that, "Christian community only exists when we grace others with the grace we ourselves have received. All Christians are charismatic. The Holy Spirit gave all Christians gifts (graces) to share with the community. Anything that graced the community was a gift. This is why Paul could speak of his celibacy as a charisma (gift - I Cor. 7:7) and his "thorn in the flesh" (II Cor, 12:7) ultimately as a gift from God."[8]

In this vision of the church the emphasis is on fellowship and community, and not necessarily evangelism. The main concern was building each other up (which was allowing love to regulate all the gifts).

If the saints of God could build up each other, then evangelism would take care of itself. There were people God was gifting for evangelism and outreach, but that could only come to full fruition in the context of a loving community. Only in the community of love could God's total ministry be performed. So the goal of the charismatic community is not fellowship for the sake of fellowship but fellowship for the sake of allowing all to maximize the God given gifts. When this occurred the Body could most effectively reach the world for Christ.

---

[8]Ibid.,pp. 136-7

Paul used the analogy of the human body to describe the church body. The church is one body made up of many members (I Cor. 12:12). What distinguishes the various members are the "gifts of the Spirit" (charismata). The Spirit by bestowing gifts arranges the parts of the body (I Cor. 12:18). There can be no dead organs in the body, and by virtue of the saving experience all are to be charismatic.

What are the Varieties of Gifts?

Most of the writers of the New Testament openly acknowledge the operation of what Paul understood as spiritual gifts, but few spent a great deal of time discussing them. Paul is the only one to reflect upon the gifts, to evaluate them, to understand what role they ought to play or to rank them in order of importance. Paul was not looking for rigid definitions, logical consistency, or structured categories, but battling the abuse of gifts by the Corinthian church. Therefore, Paul gave concrete lists of gifts (teaching, giving, serving, etc.) and gave instructions on love regulating the gifts (I Cor. 12-14). To insure that his pneumatology did not become legalism, he taught that anything which "built up" the community was a spiritual gift. The gifts were structured to combat abuses, yet not rigidly, because Paul recognized that ultimately the Holy Spirit is free.

Paul enumerates three lists of gifts: I Cor. 12:7-11, I Cor. 12-28, and Romans 12:6-8, but does not categorize or interrelate them. His main discussion of gifts is in I Cor. 12-14, with the

most crucial verse found in 12:4-6. Paul writes:

> "There are varieties (or assignments) of (the gifts of) grace, but it is the same Spirit. And there are assignments (varieties) of acts of service, but the same Lord. And there are assignments of operations, but the same God works all in all."[9]

Paul identifies three categories of gifts: assignments of grace by the Spirit, acts of service by the Lord, and acts of operations by God: "There are varieties of the gifts of grace (charismata) but the same Spirit"(I Cor. 12:4) [10].

It is very important that scholarly and exegetical integrity be maintained, so it is necessary to state that there is scholarly discussion as to whether there are three categories of gifts or one category with Paul using the writing methodology of rhetorical effect. The majority of scholars adamantly disagree with rigidly categorizing or making sharp distinctions between these verses, feeling there is only one category of gifts, but there is scholarly opinion that does categorize and delineate groupings of gifts. Arnold Bittlinger's commentary on I Corinthians is a prime example of this opinion.[11]

---

[9] Translation by Hans Conzelman, I Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 63

[10] Ibid., p. 65

[11] Arnold Bittlinger, Gifts and Graces: A Community on I Corinthinas 12-14, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), p. 17

On the other hand an example of a scholar against delineation would be Hans Conzelman.[12]

Exegetically, the weight seems to be in favor of Paul using rhetorical effect. Paul was not trying to systematize but to provide lists for instruction and guidance. For pedagogical reasons, however, it is necessary to put in Pauline categories though he did not. Specification and definition of these categories has proven to be an exceptional teaching tool, which allows the material to be taught with greater clarity. The categories are faithful and true to the Spirit of Paul's teaching on gifts, but do not line up with exegetical letter of the law.

Thus using this approach of delineation, the first variety of spiritual gifts are the gifts of grace - the Spirit by grace gives the gifts of grace. In I Cor. 12:7-11, Paul lists manifestations (phanerosis) of the Spirit. These manifestations of the Spirit in I Cor. 12:7-11 are the gifts of grace listed in vs. 4. They are one and the same and from this point will be called Manifestational gifts.

These appear to be gifts where the Spirit manifests itself to the assembled congregation in supernatural ways. John Koenig argues "these gifts enable a community of Christians to acknowledge, articulate, and praise God's presence among them."[13]

---

[12] Translation by Hans Conzelman, I Corinthinas: A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975) p. 59

[13] John Koenig, Charismata: God's Gifts for God's People, (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1978) p. 61

These gifts are operative basically in the context of congregational worship or where "two or three are gathered." These gifts are God's people experiencing God's supernatural presence among them. These are the gifts that are today known as "charismatic" (i.e. speaking in tongues, prophecy, words of knowledge, healing, etc.).

There are also acts of service (diakonia) but the same Lord. The diakonia gifts I will call ministry gifts. Ministry gifts are bestowed by the Lord Jesus Christ and listed in I Cor. 12:28-30.

Ministry gifts are gifts by which we do actual hands on serving of people. These gifts are given for the church to do the work of Christ in the world. Some of these gifts are supernatural, some not; these are gifts of humbling oneself before people and serving them. Paul is implying a truth of great beauty here - exercising the gifts of helps, for example, sharing a ride with someone to church, is as much a gift of the spirit as an act of healing. God inspires both in our hearts and sees no distinction. This is a critical insight for our day, especially for those who feel second class because their gift is not as "supernatural" or "sensational" as others. This should help us to understand that modern day "charismatics" are not the sole possessors of the spirit.

"There are varieties of operations (energema) but the same God works in all."

The third variety of gift is energemata, from the root energema which means energy, workings, or acts of operations. These are gifts of spiritual energy. In Ephesians 1:19 the writer talks about God's incomparably great power (energeia) in the resurrection of Christ. God gives spiritual energy to believers, the same energy it took to bring Christ forth from the grave.

Gifts of spiritual energy may be called motivational gifts. God motivates us to act by bestowal of spiritual energy. This energy is the power driving us to do ministry and that which gives our ministry style, emphasis, and content. God gives us these spiritual energies and they are located in Romans 12: 6-8.

To sum up what we have covered so far, we can clearly identify in Paul's letters three distinct categories of spiritual gifts. The following chart delineates the categories and the important points we have covered in summary fashion.

THREE DISTINCT CATEGORIES OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Varieties of Ministry Gifts vs. 5-diakonion	Varieties of Motivational Gifts vs. 6-energema	Varieties of Manifestational Gifts vs. 4 charismata vs. 7 phanerosis
the same Lord (Son) but different <u>service</u>	many workings but same God (Creator) works all	many charismata but same spirit... all given manifestations of Holy Spirit
Ephesians 4:11 + I Cor. 12:28	Romans 12:6-8 and 12:9-21	I Cor. 12:4, 8-11
1. Apostle 2. Prophet 3. Evangelist 4. Pastor 5. Teacher 6. Worker of Miracles 7. Healer 8. Helper 9. Administrator 10. Speaker of Tongues	1. Prophesy 2. Service 3. Teaching 4. Exhortation 5. Giving 6. Leading 7. Showing Mercy	1. Word of Wisdom 2. Word of Knowledge 3. Faith 4. Healing 5. Miracles 6. Prophesy 7. Distinguishing Spirits 8. Various Tongues 9. Interpretation
Diakonia - gifts of serving The actual hands on serving of people. The gifts of humbling oneself before people and serving. The gift of helps.	Energema - gifts of spiritual energy Energema is the word used of power of God in the resurrection of Christ (Eph. 1:19) Spiritual energy and power driving one to ministry.	Charismata - gifts of manifestation The presence of the Spirit unusually real to assembled congregation. God's people experience God's presence among them (wherever two or three are gathered).

These three categories of gifts are integrated in the believer's life. A believer performs a ministry (the ministry gift column), through a motivation (motivational gift column) and the Holy Spirit triggers a manifestation of the Spirit (manifestional gift column). God gives each Christian at least one kind of spiritual energy. If through that spiritual energy any of the ministry gifts are performed, then the Holy Spirit will manifest its presence, both to the recipients of the ministry, and to the minister. The formula is this: a ministry performed through a motivation will produce a manifestation. For example, a person may have a motivation of mercy and exercise the gift of teaching. The Holy Spirit is waiting to release one of the nine manifestations. The person performing the ministry gift of teaching does not know or has absolutely no control of any manifestation that will occur.

What makes this exciting is God has a tailor made ministry for each Christian. If Christians can find their motivation(s), do ministry, and experience the manifestation(s), their lives could be filled with such great Christ-like joy. Christians need to be challenged and asked, with all the beautiful possibilities of ministry - Why are you sitting there on the pew? With all that is possible - Why are you still accepting that boring, uninvolved brand of Christianity? God is a God of infinite variety and just as there are no two snowflakes that look the

same, no two Christians have the same ministry - motivation - manifestation combination. God has a tailor-made ministry for you. To discover that ministry and perform it is untold joy.

It must be emphasized that the bottom line of Christian living is service to others. Each member of the community is gifted to serve others. If one does no ministry (serving) there is no need of God's motivation or manifestation.

The manifestationals are defined in the context of ministry gifts. The only reason we receive the manifestation is to move us to minister. We are inspired to perspire. The manifestationals are experienced as extra measures of grace, not to prove we are super saints, or belong in the spiritual elite, but that the Spirit can heal us in infinite mercy, ministering directly to us, to prepare us for more service, after we have been wounded serving others.

The most decisive argument made by Paul for the use of spiritual gifts in service to others, in my opinion, is made in his letter to the Ephesians. Ephesians 4:1 is the watershed of the whole book where Paul states: "As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." From this summit, Paul looks back through chapters 1-3, which tells us who we are, and anticipates chapters 4-6, where we learn what we are to do about who we are. The first half of the letter is doctrine; the second half duty. Chapters 1-3 are kerygma, a proclamation; chapters 4-6 are didache, teaching.

Paul moves from the indicative - what we are - to the imperative - what we must do. The letter moves from being to doing, from grace to activity. That is the Lord's way. And it is essential to see that ministry flows from our identity in Christ. We have all we need "to live worthy of our calling" for as we are motivated by our identity in Christ to do ministry there is a manifestation of the Spirit in our lives and in the lives of those to whom we minister.

Chapter III

DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

As I have already stated, my search for a project began at the point of trying to find an effective preaching model, that leads people to genuine discipleship. With a congregation of over 4500 members and only about 800 of that number involved beyond the Sunday morning worship experience the need and the challenge of this project has always been extremely clear, that is, not just to count numbers, but to make those numbers count. It was also very clear that Paul's concept of charismatic community could impact this need and challenge in very significant ways.

After determining this general focus I shared this with my mentors, Dr. Henry Mitchell and Dr. Edward Wheeler and with members of my peer group - Cynthia Hale, Samuel Debose and Frank Thomas, who were all doing similar projects. They were all very affirming of the general direction that I was headed with this project. My step was to form a group of project associates from the local context. Dr. Bonnie Dill, a sociology professor at Memphis State University, was the first person that I asked to serve as a member of this group and it soon became clear to me that she was the best person to serve as my expertise on the process. She has consistently given invaluable assistance in making helpful suggestions about the process and motivating me

"to keep at it." Eldredge Williams, the Moderator of the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church congregation; Herbert Lester and Harold Chandler, local pastors; Maeola Killebrew and Deborah Northcross members of the Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church, were the other members of the group. After sharing with the group the need and challenge of the local context, as I perceived it and the project I was contemplating, they too affirmed the general direction of the project and pledged their support. Early on, from discussion with the group, two basic project components emerged. One, a sermon series and two, some type of small group study series related to the sermons.

I immediately went to work developing a sermon series from Ephesians. I chose Ephesians because here I found a strong theological framework for the church and for the "priesthood of all believers." The basic message of the book was that God has chosen and empowered us to be instruments of reconciliation in the world. The church is the place - the dynamic center for the consummation of the unity which is God's divine purpose for His created order. The content, structure, and length of the book of Ephesians also afforded me the opportunity to present a tight, clear, focused sermon series, without having to address other tangential matters to this project that would have been the case had I used the Roman or Corinthian correspondence. I am aware of the questions among scholars concerning Pauline authorship; however, the preponderance of evidence indicates that this is

indeed an authentic Pauline correspondence. The sermon titles and texts were as follows:

THE MASTER PLAN ..... Ephesians 1:3-14
THE MASTER'S PROVISION ..... Ephesians 2:1-10
THE MASTER'S POWER ..... Ephesians 3:14-20
IT'S YOUR MOVE ..... Ephesians 4:1-7
OPEN YOUR GIFT..... Ephesians 4:8-16

Initially, I started the series on Wednesday nights during the regular Wednesday night Praise Service and using one of the small Bible cell groups that met on Wednesdays to hold the study sessions. I preached three of the sermons in the series and met with the small study groups and the response was overwhelmingly positive from those involved. However, with a group of only 200 persons involved on Wednesday nights I did not have the sense that I was really impacting the congregation. I decided, therefore, to go "prime-time" and move the series to the Sunday morning hour.

The sermons were preached at both the 9:00 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. services, involving approximately 2800 people between the two. In addition to the sermons, the six existing Bible study groups that met during the week were used as the forum for the small study sessions on the text to be preached on that coming Sunday. There were approximately 15 to 20 people in each of the classes. I taught the class on Mondays, and assistant ministers

and lay persons from that class led the classes on the other nights of the week. This gave me the opportunity early in the week to get involved in the text, to clearly establish the parameters of the pericope for the teachers, and to receive feedback from the class about the series. These sessions were invaluable! I picked up biblical insights which I probably never would have gotten without this kind of exchange. In addition, those who participated in the classes during the week came to the preaching event on Sundays with added interest and enthusiasm. This model of Teach/Preach has great potential for the Church, as those who hear the sermon, and have also participated in some form of study prior to the sermon, are more likely to make the behavioral changes that are desired. This was clearly proven and demonstrated in this project, as I will point out later.

On the fifth week of the sermon series each member of the congregation received a "gift scroll" listing spiritual gifts with the corresponding scriptural references (see appendix A). They were asked, based on their understanding of spiritual gifts to check the gift(s) they believed they had. They were also asked to indicate why they believed they possessed the particular gift(s). 1210 of the "gift scrolls" were completed and returned. Needless to say, I was very pleased with this kind of participation.

Two weeks after the sermon series and the "gift scrolls" were returned, each member of the congregation received a letter from me encouraging the deployment of their spiritual gift(s) in

the life and work of the church. Included in the letter was a listing of spiritual gifts, with corresponding areas of ministry in the life and work of the church, and with a contact person and phone number in each ministry area (see Appendix B). The members of the congregation were encouraged to call the person in the ministry area in which they believed they had gifts and indicate their interest in working in that particular area. I am aware of 148 calls that were made. I suspect that there were more. But 52 of the total calls were made by those who had participated in the weekly Bible study and Sunday worship experience.

Chapter IV

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

There were two basic components of this project. One, there was the 5 week sermon series during the 9:00 a.m. and 12:15 p.m. worship times on Sundays. Two, there were the small study groups that met during the week preceding the Sunday preaching event.

I spent a great deal of time preparing the Sunday sermons. I tried to faithfully exegete the text and at the same time deliver a word that was relevant, dynamic and clear with a focused behavioral purpose. The very first sermon in the series was titled, "The Master Plan". The sermon was based on Ephesians 1:3-14. The behavioral purpose of the sermon was to create an attitude of excitement that God has a master plan for our lives. This master plan can be clearly seen in the fact that God

> "... chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestinated us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will - to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves."[14]

I tried to suggest in the sermon some of the excitement Paul must have felt and tried to communicate as he wrote this very long sentence in Ephesians 1 about what God has done in our lives. I concluded the sermon by indicating that because we are part of God's master plan, it means that no situation or set of

---

[14]C. Leslie Mitton, The New Century Bible Commentary on Ephesians, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1973) p. 25

circumstances ultimately has the power to defeat or destroy us. I further suggested that because of who we are in Christ Jesus we are in the position to say to those foes without and fears within, in the words of the Black rap star, M.C. Hammer, "U can't touch this!"

This sermon created a tremendous amount of excitement in the congregation. Thirty people came forward during the invitation to christian discipleship. This sense of excitement in the congregation was sustained during the subsequent sermons with no less than 10 persons coming forward each Sunday during the invitation to christian discipleship. I followed the same pattern that I followed in the first sermon with the remaining sermons, and that was a clear behavioral purpose; faithful exegesis of the text; and relevant application for our living today.

I made the decision at the beginning of the project to have the sermons videotaped so that I would have an accurate record of what happened during the preaching event. It later occurred to me that it would be well to include the videotape of the series in the replicable model that it might be used as part of the small group process in future contexts. This, I have done. While the videotaping is not of professional quality, it is of adequate quality to give a sense of what happened during the preaching event as well as provide a framework for reflection and discussion.

The second component of the project was the small Bible study groups. Initially, I thought the sermon series would be the "main event", however as the project developed it became evident that the sermon series was playing "second fiddle" to the study groups. While the sermons created an attitude and atmosphere of excitement about spiritual gifts and about being part of God's master plan, it was within the context of small groups that people received the support and encouragement to follow-through and make the commitment to use their gifts in ministry.

Three of the small groups were already in place. Three additional ones were created simply by inviting people to Bible study on weekday nights. The result was a total of six groups with 15 to 20 people in each. The groups met for one hour using the format that follows on the next pages for each session.

The outline that follows indicates the study questions raised and discussed in the groups. While this was a significant part of the group process, even more significant was what took place with the relationships between group members. There developed a great deal of love and caring in the groups. This happened without very much planning and direction on my part or on the part of group leaders, but was the natural result of the small group process. Group members called each other when people missed. One of the young ladies in one of the groups lost her Father in Atlanta, and seven members of her group made the trip to Atlanta to attend her Father's funeral. Relationships were

formed and some continue even now. These relationships and the sense of belonging and being accepted, I believe was critical to helping people move from interest to involvement. I'll have more to say about that later.

Session 1

The Master Plan

Ephesians 1:3-14

The purpose of this session is to create an attitude of excitement that God has a master plan for our lives.

Examining the Text

1. Who was Paul?
2. Why did Paul write Ephesians?
3. How does Paul's use of the word saint (v.1) differ from popular usage today?
    a. If we really think of ourselves as saints, how will it affect the way we live?
4. When did God establish His plan for the salvation of humankind?
5. What does the concept of adoption communicate about our relationship with God through Jesus Christ?

Experiencing the Text

1. Do you believe God has a master plan for your life that He is carefully completing now?
    a. How can you frustrate His plan?
2. What will you do as a result of this study? Be specific.

Session 2

The Master's Provision

Ephesians 2:1-10

The purpose of this study is to help people see that salvation is God's work and not our own so that the best we can do is to receive with gratitude the Master's provision.

Examining the Text

1. What does it mean to be dead in transgressions and sins?
2. What was God's response to our death in transgressions and sins? Be specific.
3. Why do you think God chose grace rather than works?

Experiencing the Text

1. What one word best describes your life before Christ? After Christ?
    a. How has your life changed since you met Christ?
2. What has God's grace meant for you?
    a. What good works has God created you to do?
3. What will you do as a result of this study? Be specific.

Session 3

The Master's Power

Ephesians 3:14-21

The purpose of this study is to be moved to seek the power that comes through giving Christ total possession of our lives.

Examining the Text

1. Why does Paul pray as he does (recall the themes of Ephesians 2, especially vv. 19-22).
2. What requests does Paul make for the Ephesians?
3. What do you think Paul meant when he expressed a desire for the Ephesians to be strengthened in their "inner being" ? (v.16)

Experiencing the Text

1. What are some obvious areas of life in which we need spiritual power as we live and serve God today?
2. If you truly allowed Christ to dwell in (completely possess) your heart, how would your life change?
3. In what areas do you think God's qualities or attributes need to be experienced more fully in your life?
4. What will you do as a result of this study? Be specific.

Session 4

It's Your Move

Ephesians 4:1-6

The purpose of this study is to get motivated to live out the doctrine that Paul communicated in the first three chapters of his letter to the Ephesians.

Examining the Text

1. What does "therefore" refer to in Ephesians 4:11?
2. If we are saved by grace, why are we obligated to do anything?
3. What is the source of the unity all believers possess?
4. What do all believers have in common as members of Christ?

Experiencing the Text

1. What role do you play in building up the body of Christ?
2. What role will you play? Be specific.

Session 5

Open Your Gift

Ephesians 4:7-16

The purpose of this session is to discover and use the special gifts of grace which have been given to every believer in the body to enable us to serve.

Examining the Text

1. Who has received this special endowment for service? (v.7)
2. According to Paul, what did Christ do to make it possible for Him to give gifts to those who believe in Him?
3. Why the different gifts? What's the aim and purpose of being gifted?

Experiencing the Text

1. What should it mean in our churches if each of us has been given a special enabling for service?
2. What gifts do you believe God has given you?
3. In what ways will you use your gift(s) for the building up the body of Christ? Be specific.

Chapter V

EVALUATING THE PROJECT

I start this evaluation of the project with a simple listing of the statistical data received from the evaluative instrument that I used. 1210 of the "gift scrolls" were completed and returned (see appendix A). Following is a listing of the numbers that noted giftedness in the areas indicated:

The Gift of Prophecy	20
The Gift of Pastor	8
The Gift of Missionary	26
The Gift of Evangelism	19
The Gift of Exhortation	25
The Gift of Craftsmanship	43
The Gift of Wisdom	71
The Gift of Teaching	152
The Gift of Discerning Spirits	31
The Gift of Knowledge	69
The Gift of Giving	230
The Gift of Helps	243
The Gift of Hospitality	180
The Gift of Music	100
The Gift of Prayer and Intercession	34
The Gift of Leadership	111
The Gift of Mercy	61
The Gift of Faith	121
The Gift of Administration	73
The Gift of Service	197
The Gift of Miracles	11
The Gift of Healing	17

A number of persons checked three or four areas of giftedness. Most, however, checked only one or two areas. Some of the reasons given were: "Everyone always tells me that this is my gift; I can feel and I know; I love to teach; I love to sing; I'm good with my hands; I enjoy working with the sick; I feel

very uncomfortable when I am not using these gifts."

The responses to the second question, "What I will do as a result of the sermon series and the discovery of my spiritual gifts" were quite interesting and encouraging. Some made very general commitments: "I am going to use my gifts; serve God; try to be more Christlike; try to be more receptive; pray for direction." However, many others were quite specific: "I'm going to join the Choir; work with the Clothes Closet; teach Church School; attend my Bible Class; spend more time in prayer; become an usher; work with the prayer team". A couple of persons indicated that they were not sure what they were going to do. One young lady in the congregation who is an Attorney by profession indicated that she would offer free legal services to members of the congregation who could not afford them.

All through the process of this project there was a tremendous amount of excitement at Mississippi Boulevard. Our church increased drastically in love and fellowship as we explored together what it meant to be part of a "Master Plan." We found that it changed the perceptions of church members when they realized they have been gifted by the Spirit. It motivated people to work when they discovered there are no dead organs in the Body and the life of the Body is the living interplay of Spirit-inspired ministry. People get excited when they understand what Paul meant by charismata and are not intimidated or made to feel uncomfortable by "charismatics" who contend only they have the Spirit. How liberating it is to understand that

all of God's people are charismatic and some charismata is supernatural and some not! What a feeling of joy it is to know that it matters not what kind of charismata you receive but whom you serve after having received it. To know the Spirit is gifting me - insignificant me - is enough to get many of the faithful off the pew.

It would be more than intellectual dishonesty to claim that the entire church responded in this fashion; it would be a bold-faced lie. Many of the members of Mississippi Boulevard seem to be at the same point they were as this project made no distinguishable difference. But for a few, I would dare say the experience was life changing.

I do know that this series has caused many people who have seen themselves primarily as recipients of ministry to, in the very least, start thinking about the possibility that maybe there's something they have been called and gifted to do in ministry. As I indicated earlier after the congregational mailing that followed the sermon series with the listing of spiritual gifts and corresponding areas of ministry, 148 calls were made by persons indicating interest. 52 of the total calls were made by those who heard the sermons and participated in the week-day Bible Study. Also, I personally know of 27 persons in the congregation who had no prior involvement outside of Sunday Worship, but have now gotten involved in a ministry area as a result of this series. While this is not a large number comparatively speaking, it does suggest that with a model of this

kind in place on an ongoing basis, significant changes can be made in making numbers count.

All of the feedback from participants and program associates has been overwhelmingly positive. However, the one criticism received from several project associates was that the model would be better served if the series had been longer, with several more sermons on spiritual gifts and if there had been more time for sharing information in the small groups. The thinking was that if people better understood that they are "gifted" as members of a "charismatic community" that it would be very difficult for them not to assume their proper place as active participants in the Body of Christ.

While the suggestion to lengthen the series might very well have increased the model's effectiveness, I realized from this suggestion a deeper truth that has become clearer in the process of this project. People do not make changes on the basis of intellectual information alone, no matter how brilliant or "deep" it is. People can receive truth intellectually but it may take a lifetime to act upon the truth we learn. Intellectual re-definition is not enough to foster the growth that will help people to assume their place in the Body of Christ.

All this illustrates that Dr. Henry Mitchell's basic premise is true, "that faith is not born of rational argument." Preaching must be addressed to the "whole person." But further, as the data from this project suggests, preaching must be addressed in the context of a whole community. People do not

grow on cognitive material alone, but rather cognition grounded in an accepting, affirming and encouraging community. People grow because of a loving community. The Spirit of and the Spirit in and the Spirit underneath the gifts is loving fellowship and community. Only in this context can people take the risks necessary to live out the intellectual truths learned.

It also became evident during the implementation of this project that this model would be much more effective with a smaller more controlled group. This of course is contrary to what I thought at the beginning of this project and that thinking was the reason for moving the series to "prime time" on Sunday mornings. But I discovered it was very difficult to manage the large numbers on Sunday mornings and to accurately measure changes in attitude and behavior. A smaller more manageable group would have made this a much easier and more accurate process.

Also during the course of implementing the project it became clear that I had not done enough work on the front end to put an adequate delivery system in place. Once persons indicated interest in an area I did not have sufficient mechanisms in place to move them from interest to involvement. I think a lot more people would have gotten involved if we had had a better delivery system in place. For instance, 152 people indicated that they had the gift of teaching, however, we did not have an adequate system in place to train and place that number of people in a ministry area. This was one of the significant learnings from

the project for me that it is not enough to motivate and inspire people to become involved without having an easy clear way for them to express that involvement.

Chapter VI

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

I began this paper stating that the need and challenge of the church today is not just to count numbers, but to make numbers count. I suggested that a sermon series with very clear behavioral purposes along with small groups working through the material to be presented in the sermon was a way to address this need and challenge. Because of this assumption, I spent much time and energy in sermon preparation and planning for the small group discussions (see Appendix C). But, after five weeks of preaching and teaching, only a few moved to become a more involved part of the Body of Christ. The lethargic majority are still the lethargic majority. As one might suspect, all of my assumptions have been challenged.

I have realized that it takes years to share and shape, particularly reshape, a vision of the church. The vision of most people cannot be re-defined by the presentation of a new intellectual framework. New knowledge is not always the power to behave in new ways. The vision or view of the church of most people is imbedded deeply, frequently across the course of many years. It takes significant portions of time, sweat, patience, and prayer to facilitate someone re-defining the nature of the church.

Within the context of understanding the time parameters of

redefinition, it is also necessary to realize that a new intellectual framework will not facilitate change for most. Intellectual knowledge must be encircled by loving community if it is to be effective. A loving group process is necessary to encourage people to take the "risks" that are forced upon them by the attempt to appropriate new truth. At the heart of the re-shaping must be loving community. I venture to say there is no shortage of intellectual frameworks for understanding the church, but people everywhere are thirsting for loving community. Preaching and teaching, no matter how sound, without loving community will never motivate people to make the desired changes.

My sense now is that if the church is ever to effectively grapple with under-involvement it must establish a more loving small group process. I feel so strongly about it and it has become such a priority with me, that we have established small groups, meeting for an hour with twelve to fifteen people in each group, every day of the week at the church. The follow-up with the 27 persons who got involved in ministry as a result of this project has been to encourage their involvement in one of the 14 small groups that now meet at the church for Bible study and fellowship.

Until the results of this project I thought the most important component of Paul's view of the church was the intellectual framework of gifts, but now I understand things at a deeper level and understand that for Paul the gifts only usher us to the concept of loving community. The church so desperately

needs to re-discover New Testament Koinonia and its implications for today. Maybe we would have more involvement if we spent less time on doctrinal purity or denominational politics and worked to establish loving community.

Even as I sit and finger in my memory all the work and planning that has gone into this project, and the facts that the results were not as great as I dreamed, I am not disappointed. I have learned a truth that will serve me all my days: for growth to occur there must be loving community encircling intellectual knowledge. This knowledge has changed the way I look at worship, Bible study, and the entire church community and headed me in new directions.

Nevertheless, the problem of rampant under-involvement still pains me. This forces me to continue to seek new solutions. Eusebius after grappling with the Christian criminal behavior points us to prayer. And that is where I am now, prayer. Eusebius helps me to see that after we do all we can, there is comfort in knowing we can go to God and ask God to do all God can do with our laboring. There must be the component of prayer. I am in prayer as to what the next levels of laboring will be and what more might lift the burden off of those that are being worked to death. Eusebius writes:

> "Take Petrus' widow. She died of nervous exhaustion only a couple of weeks ago. She too was an athletic christian. She sang in the choir and played the lyricon for cherubs when they sang. She was janitress, deaconess, babysitter, and collected old togas for the poor. She ran atrium sales and baked squab for the visiting evangelists. It is hard to know whether it would be better to be eaten by lions or just collapse

> from the schedule...(she) just collapsed baking a pan of figgy bread for the women's group. Her last words were not directly translatable, although some thought it sounded like a grateful gasp....Pray for us that more christians will see their divine responsibility to become more committed....[15]

Eusebius's prayer is my prayer, "that more christians will see their divine responsibility to become more committed" and that those of us given the responsibility of providing leadership for the church will find more ways not just to count numbers but to make numbers count.

---

[15] Calvin Miller, The Philippian Fragment, (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982) pp. 136-138

APPENDIX A

MY SPIRITUAL GIFT(S)

"...when he ascended upon high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."

Ephesians 4:8

Based on your understanding of the biblical definitions of Spiritual gifts, please answer accordingly. Please check the appropriate box(es). I believe that my spiritual gift(s) is/are:

A. Prophecy _____ I Cor. 12:10, 28; Eph. 4:11-14; Romans 12:6
B. Pastor _____ Eph. 4:11-14; 1 Thomthy 3:1-7; John 10:1-8
C. Missionary _____ I Cor. 9:19-23; Acts 8:4; Acts 13:2-3
D. Evangelism _____ Eph. 4:11-14; II Timothy 4:5; Acts 8:5-6
E. Exhortation _____ Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 4:13; Hebrews: 10-25
F. Craftsmanship _____ II Chr. 34:9-13; Acts 16:14; Acts 18:3
G. Wisdom _____ I Cor. 2:1-13; I Cor. 12:8; Acts 5:1-11
H. Teaching _____ I Cor. 12:28; Romans 12:7; Eph. 4:11-14
I. Discerning of Spirits _____ I Cor. 12:10; Acts 16:16-18
J. Knowledge _____ I Cor. 2:14; I Cor. 12:8; Acts 5:1-11
K. Giving _____ Romans 12:8; II Cor. 8:17; II Cor. 9:2-8
L. Helps _____ I Cor. 12:28; Romans 16:1-2; Acts 9:36
M. Hospitality _____ I Peter 4:9; Romans 12:9-13; Romans 16:23
N. Music _____ I Chr. 16:41-42; II Chr. 5:2-13; II Chr. 34:12
O. Prayer/Intercession _____ James 5:14-16; I Tim. 2-12; Col. 1:9-12
P. Leadership _____ I Tim. 5:17; Acts 7:10; Acts 15:7-11
Q. Mercy _____ Romans 12:8; Mark 9:41; Acts 16:33-34
R. Faith _____ I Cor. 12:9; Acts 11:22-24; Acts 27:21-25
S. Administration _____ I Cor. 12:28; Acts 6:1-7; Acts 27:11
T. Service _____ II Tim. 1:16-18; Romans 12:7; Acts 6:1-7
U. Miracles _____ I Cor. 12:10, 28; Acts 9:36-42; Acts 19:11-20
V. Healing _____ I Cor. 12:9, 28; Acts 3:1-10; Acts 5:12-16

Name _____

Address _____ Phone # _____

Occupation _____

Employer _____ Phone # _____

I have checked the above Spiritual gift(s) because: (Please be specific) _____

_____

What will you do as a result of the series on Ephesians and discovering that you have a gift of gifts: _____

_____

APPENDIX B

October 25, 1990

Dear Member:

It is with great joy that I write to you today. I am excited about what the Lord is doing in our midst and that you are a part of this vital ministry. I want to encourage your involvement.

I have read with great interest all of the Spiritual Gift Inventory Forms that were recently completed. I have noted your comments and I want you to feel free to give me a call if you would like to come and talk further about your gift(s).

Included with this letter are current ministry areas in the life of our church, along with a contact person and phone number. We have placed under the ministry areas spiritual gifts that are needed to serve effectively in these areas. I'd like for you to look over the list and if you see a ministry area that you feel you have gifts for and would like to serve in, please call the contact person indicated and introduce yourself. They will be glad to hear from you.

I praise God for His gifts and for you! And you know what? I love you and there's not a thing you can do about it! See you soon.

Yours in Ministry,

Alvin O. Jackson
Senior Pastor

AOJ:ehc

AMBASSADORS ..... KAREN BLAKELY 789-0131
Prayer/Intercession, Discerning Spirits, Exhortation, Pastor

BUS MINISTRY ..... MELVIN FOSTER 346-2884
Service, Hospitality

CHILDREN'S CHURCH ..... SOTELLO LONG 345-1312
Teaching, Leadership, Knowledge

CHOIRS ..... LEO DAVIS 345-1312
Music, Helps, Service, Hospitality

CLOTHES CLOSET ..... JAMES JOHNSON 795-0669
Service, Hospitality, Missionary, Evangelism

CHRISTIAN MEN'S FELLOWSHIP ..... FRED YARBROUGH 398-6257
Service, Leadership

CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP ..... DIANNA JONES 367-0861
Service, Leadership

FOOD PANTRY ..... DELORES FLAGG 332-1286
Service, Hospitality

GOLDEN FRIENDS (SENIOR CITIZENS) ... ANN STRIBLING 946-5435
Service, Leadership

GREETERS ..... GLADYS JENNINGS 948-3872
Hospitality, Service

MANNA OUTREACH ..... C. L. WELLS 358-1259
Giving, Helps, Hospitality, Prayer/Intercession, Mercy

CHURCH SCHOOL ..... EMILY JACKSON 743-3407
Knowledge, Wisdom, Teaching

YOUTH MINISTRY ..... SOTELLO LONG 345-1312
Service, Leadership

CHRISTIAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION ..... CAROLE DICKENS 363-9742
Service, Helps, Hospitality, Healing, Mercy

INTERCESSORY PRAYER MINISTRY ..... YVONNE RILEY 789-3445
Faith, Healing, Mercy, Miracles, Exhortation, Prophecy, Evangelism

MEDIA MINISTRY ..... RAY GRIFFIN 345-1312
Service, Helps

PRISON MINISTRY ..... MELVYN GROSS 345-1312
Pastor, Mercy, Exhortation, Prophecy

STEWARDSHIP ..... ELDREDGE WILLIAMS 396-2623
Administration, Service, Helps

USHERS ..... ROBERT THOMPSON 278-0978
Service, Helps, Hospitality

W. A. T. S. A. ..... CLARENCE BOONE 785-3433
(WHOLISTIC APPROACH TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE)
Mercy, Healing, Miracles, Evangelism

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION ..... DEBORAH NORTHCROSS 274-4127
Knowledge, Teaching, Wisdom

MEMBERSHIP COMMISSION ..... VERA JONES 332-2139
Pastor, Exhortation, Hospitality, Helps, Administration

SOCIAL CONCERNS ..... GWEN SNEED 365-7519
Mercy, Missionary, Evangelism

CHRISTIAN SINGLES ..... DON WESLEY 396-3812
Discerning of Spirits, Service, Leadership

COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

Anderson, Phillip A., Church Meetings That Really Matter, (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1982).

Banks, Robert, Paul's Idea of Community, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980).

Barclay, William, The Letters to the Corinthians, (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1975).

Barrett, C.K., The First Epistle to the Corinthians, (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1968).

Berkhof, Hendrikus, The Doctrine of the Holy Spirit, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982).

Bittlinger, Arnold, Gifts and Ministries, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973).

Bruce, Fredrick Fyvie, The New Century Bible Commentary: I & II Corinthians, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971).

Bruner, Frederick D., A Theology of the Holy Spirit: The Pentecostal Experience and New Testaments Witness, (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973).

Conzelman, Hans, I Corinthians, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

Dunn, James, "Models of Christian Community in the New Testament", The Church is Charismatic, ed. by Arnold bittlinger, (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1981).

DuPlessis, David, The Spirit Made Me Go, (Logos International, 1970).

Ellis, E.E., "Spiritual Gifts in the Pauline Community", New Testament Studies Vol. 20 (1974).

Flynn, Leslie B., 19 Gifts of the Spirit (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1982).

Getz, Gene A., Building Up One Another, (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983).

Heron, Alasdair I.C., The Holy Spirit, (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1983).

COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY (cont.)

Hull, Bill, The Disciple Making Pastor, (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell, 1988).

Kasemann, Ernest, "Ministry and Community in the New Testament" and "The Pauline Doctrine of the Lord's Supper", Essays on New Testament Themes, (London: SCM Press, 1964).

Kasemann, Ernest, "Worship in Everyday Life: A Note on Romans 12" and "Unity and Multiplicity in the New Testament Doctrine of the Church", New Testament Questions for Today, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969).

Kelsey, Morton, Encounter With God, (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc. 1972).

Kelsey, Morton, Tongue Speaking: The History and Meaning of the Charismatic Experience, (New York: Crossroads Press, 1981).

Koenig, John, Charismata: God's Gift for God's People, (Philadelphia: Westminister Press, 1978).

Martin, Ralph, The Spirit and the Congregation: Studies in I Corinthians 12-15, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984).

Miller, Calvin, The Philippian Fragment (Downers Grove, Illinois, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1982).

Mitchell, Henry A., Celebration and Experience in Preaching, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990).

McCrae, William, Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976).

Minear, Paul, Images of the Church in the New Testament, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press).

Montaque, George, The Holy Spirit: Growth of a Biblical Tradition, (New York: Paulist Press, 1976).

Raines, Robert A., New Life in the Church, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980).

Smith, Chuck, Charisma vs. Charismania, (Oregon: Harvest House Publishers, 1983).

Trueblood, Elton, A Time for Holy Dissatisfaction, Leadership Journal (Winter, 1983).

COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY (cont.)

Wagner, C. Peter, Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow, (Ventura, C.A.: Regal Books, 1979).

Williman, William H., Integrative Preaching - The Pulpit at Center, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981).

Yohn, Rick, Discover Your spiritual Gift and Use It, (Wheaton: Tyndale Publishers, 1974).